(b) Fine of Rs 50,000 plus the price of LPG diverted at commercial rates for 2nd offence, and

(c) Termination of the distributorship for 3rd offence.

(iii) Government have issued advertisements cautioning the public that use of domestic LPG for non-domestic purposes is illegal, dangerous and against national interest. Through these advertisements, cooperation of the general public has also been sought to report any irregularity/ malpractice to the OMCs.

(iv) Government have advised OMCs to introduce different colours for domestic and non-domestic cylinders. This is also expected to help in controlling the diversion of domestic LPG for unauthorized use.

In respect of benami operations and dhabas near petrol pumps, OMCs have instructed their field staff to strictly monitor such cases and incorporate remarks in the inspection report. Special vigilance would be kept on ROs of suspected benami operations with a view to identify the same and take corrective action.

OMCs have launched structured training programmes for SC/ST candidates which would also include training at COCOs and at some high selling ROs to make them aware of their responsibility towards proper functioning of dealership as per Dealership Agreement, MDG etc.

OMCs are encouraging non-fuel initiatives to supplement the income of the dealers by improving the customer service by putting up facilities like Dhabas etc, wherever possible.

(d) The OMCs take action against the dealers found indulging in malpractices as per Marketing Discipline Guidelines (MDG)/Dealership Agreement. The State Governments are also empowered to take legal action against such dealers under the Essential Commodities Act, 1955, which includes imprisonment. Details of number of offenders punished with imprisonment for above malpractices during the last three years are being collected from the States/UTs and will be laid on the table of the house.

(e) While, as per a study conducted by the National Council of Applied Economic Research to assess the genuine demand and requirement of kerosene, siphoning off of kerosene from PDS to non-household use is estimated at 18.1 per cent of total sale of PDS kerosene, no estimation of loss to the exchequer on account of adulteration in petrol and diesel is available.

Request of CITU to reduce the tax rates on petroleum products

1015. SHRIMATI HEMA MALINI: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Centre for Indian Trade Union (CITU) has demanded for decrease in tax rates on petroleum products since Indian consumers are required to pay highest price for petrol; and

(b) if so, the reaction of Government thereon with details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) and (b) Based on the requests received from various quarters, the Government has revised excise duty on petrol several times. The details of changes in excise duty on petrol since April, 2002 are given in the Statement.

Statement

Excise duty on petrol since 1st April, 2002

Product	As on 1/4/02	As on 4/6/02	As on 1/3/03	As on 16/6/04	As on 9/7/04	As on 19/08/04	As on 1/3/05	As on 1/3/06	As on 1/3/07
Petrol –									
Advalorem	32.00%,	30.00%	30.00%	26.00%	26.00%	23.00%	8.00%	8.00%	6.00%,
Specific	Rs. 7/ Ltr.	Rs. 7/ Ltr.	Rs. 7.50/ Ltr.	Rs. 7.50/ Ltr.	Rs 7.50/ Ltr.	Rs 7.50/ Ltr.	Rs. 13/ Ltr.	Rs. 13/ Ltr.	Rs. 13/ Ltr.

Alternate arrangement for Indo-Iran Gas Pipeline Project

1016. SHRI DEVDAS APTE: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is fact that the US Energy Secretary has opposed the Indo-Iran Gas Pipeline in view of the recent sanction imposed on Iran;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government are planning any alternate arrangement for this project;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) how much expenditure has been incurred so far on the Indo-Iran Gas Pipeline Project?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) and (d) Government is pursuing import of natural gas from Iran through Iran-Pakistan-India gas pipeline project.

(e) GAIL (India) Ltd. (GAIL) & Indian Oil Corporation Ltd. (IOCL), the PSUs involved with the project, have spent approximately Rs.3.50 crores on the technical & financial consultants appointed for the project.

Auction of oil and gas blocks in 7th round of NELP

1017. DR. M.A.M. RAMASWAMY: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Central Government has delayed the auction of oil and gas blocks under the seventh round of New Exploration Licensing Policy (NELP);

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;